



STATE OF UTAH

GARY R. HERBERT
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
84114-2220

SPENCER J. COX
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

March 25, 2019

Dear President Adams and Speaker Wilson,

I have vetoed SB 123, Election Process Amendments. Compared to how candidates are selected in our regular Congressional elections, this bill significantly limits participation and choice in elections to fill vacancies in the United States House of Representatives and therefore limits the ability of Utah voters to choose their Congressional representatives. I am also concerned that the replacement process for the United States Senate identified in SB123 creates ambiguities by failing to explain how the entire Legislature will forward three names to the Governor.

Utah law provides multiple paths to the ballot for partisan elections: a political party convention and signature gathering being the most common. These options have been embraced by the majority of Utah voters as providing reasonable alternatives to access the ballot.

Although most general election candidates are chosen through the party convention process, recent election results demonstrate that Utah primary voters appreciate the choice afforded by both the political party convention method and the signature gathering method for candidate selection. For example, John Curtis, who ultimately won the Republican primary for the special election in Utah's third congressional district, got his name onto the Republican Party primary ballot because he gathered signatures.

The caucus system has been preserved in Utah law and remains a strong, critical component of Utah elections. Recent changes in Utah law add to that foundation and give candidates the choice to pursue one or more options. That system is working well for both candidates and voters. SB123 establishes a different system that removes choices from candidates and from the voters.

For these reasons, I have vetoed SB123. I look forward to working with the Legislature on a Congressional vacancy replacement procedure that reflects our general election process.

Sincerely,

Gary R. Herbert
Governor